



## Research Article

### Incorporating Interaction into Teaching Writing Essays in the EFL/ESL (L2) Setting

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#### Abstract

**Objective:** The paper highlights the challenges of writing essays and emphasizes the importance of a systematic approach to essay writing. The author aims to convey that good writing is a gradual process that requires interaction, rigorous thinking and meticulous planning, contrasting the notion that essays are spontaneously produced in one draft.

**Method:** Applying a mixed-methods research approach, the author undertakes the study. The research involves the use of questionnaires to gather data from 38 undergraduate students in a reputed college in Nepal. The use of mixed methods suggests a comprehensive investigation that combines quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more holistic understanding of the student's experiences with essay writing.

**Result:** The findings of the research reflect a strong need for step-by-step guidance, fun, and interaction in writing classes, particularly when teaching essay writing. The result suggests that students benefit from a systematic and interactive approach to learning how to write essays. It implies that a more engaging and structured method of teaching can be effective in addressing the challenges students face in essay writing.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion drawn from the study is that the production of a quality essay is rather a gradual evolution resulting from rigorous thinking and meticulous planning. It recommends a methodical division of the essay-writing process into steps to achieve coherence and effectiveness. Additionally, it proposes incorporating hands-on activities in conjunction with writing theories to enhance the teaching of essay writing. Overall, the conclusion emphasizes the importance of a systematic and interactive approach to teaching writing essays.

**Keywords:** interaction, incorporating, second language, essay, revision, errors

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#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Writing a long piece of writing is daunting, time-consuming, and challenging, for good writing does not happen overnight.

Good writers elicit emotional responses, explain, persuade, and impress. Professional writers, as noted by Hamilton<sup>[1]</sup> do not sit down and spontaneously produce an essay in one

draft. Instead, they undertake a systematic approach, working on it incrementally. Hamilton highlights that the creation of a quality essay is not an instantaneous event but rather a gradual evolution that results from rigorous thinking and meticulous planning.

Similarly, when it comes to good writing, we often have an appreciation for it, even if we cannot precisely articulate why it resonates with us. Simon and Schuster<sup>[2]</sup> wrote that a good essay engages, moves, or provokes readers. More importantly, it appeals to the readers in some way. Good writing can anger readers, or fascinate readers with its powerful words.

It is understandable that most teachers find it difficult to teach writing in class. On the contrary to speaking, listening, or reading, writing a well-crafted essay is a hard nut to crack. Writing a well-crafted essay demands sustainable efforts, good vocabulary, clear thought, reworking, etc. Moreover, students are not as motivated to write essays as they are motivated to partake in other activities like role play, fieldwork, presentation, etc. To motivate students to participate collaboratively in different stages of writing a well-crafted essay, teachers need a tremendous effort and some fun-filled activities.

Izaskun and Gil-Sarratea<sup>[3]</sup> held the opinion that collaboration has typically been implemented either for idea generation before the writing task or for receiving feedback from either the teacher or peers on the drafted or finalized text. Collaboration invite participation from each student in class. Furthermore, Ferris and Hedgcock<sup>[4]</sup> recommend that writing activities be carried out compatible with the needs, interests, and ideological status of the students. Teachers must adopt some strategies to encourage students to develop their writing skills.

Most students become ready to write essays in conducive, congenial, and stimulating environments. Student readiness can be maximized through the interactive involvement of the students in class if we educators refrain ourselves from involving direct in students' interaction but playing a role of a facilitator<sup>[5]</sup>. Teng and Zhang conducted a study revealing that motivational regulation strategies have a direct but relatively small impact on the academic performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Additionally, the study suggests the need for increased focus on researching motivational regulatory strategies specifically in the context of EFL writing<sup>[6]</sup>. Many students find writing a mundane activity. So, the responsibility relies on teachers' shoulders that they must come up with inventive ideas to make their writing sessions engaging, interactive, fun, and productive.

For writing to be genuinely accessible, it must exhibit cohesion and coherence. Individuals employ various registers in their writing, tailoring their language to different topics and tones suitable for their target audience. Consequently,

it is essential to educate students on this aspect of English, enabling them to select appropriate language proficiency. Singh<sup>[7]</sup> demanded that the role of writing in the English curriculum be integral, with its significance varying across different teaching contexts. It consistently serves as a tool to reinforce the language skills imparted during instruction.

As writing an essay in academics is indispensable, every student wants to enhance their essay writing skills. According to Strongman's<sup>[7]</sup> analysis in 2013, writers, including teachers, students, and researchers, compose essays as a fundamental means of organizing and conveying ideas within academic pursuits. Essays, as outlined by Strongman, act as a mirror reflecting an individual's grasp of concepts, writing prowess, and organizational skills. This article shares some takeaway strategies for integrating collaborative learning into writing essays, with the goal of honing students' writing skills. Teachers have the potential to make the tiring writing task a joy by incorporating some collaborative activities into it. I adopted the following approaches to teaching writing essays in undergraduate classes and collected their feedback to reflect on my own work and share its outcomes with others who are interested in the topic that I am dealing with. I am certain that this write-up will help you and your students write with poise, power, and flair.

## **2 STEP-BY-STEP GUIDANCE ON TEACHING WRITING ANY ESSAYS**

### **2.1 Getting Started through Prewriting**

As a teacher, the first thing you must do is to offer some strategies that help your students to brainstorm relevant points. The objective of prewriting is to generate as many rough ideas in the form of raw material as possible. Adding, slashing, or editing can be done later. Some of the prewriting strategies you can offer your students before writing the first draft of their essay are listed below.

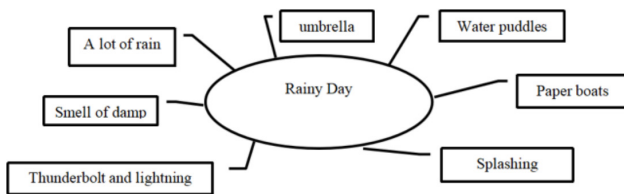
#### **2.1.1 Example Activities**

Divide your students into groups depending on the number of students you have. After that, provide them with blank cards or A4 sheets of paper. Instruct them to write down whatever comes into their minds relevant to the topic given to them (For e.g. My Hometown, My Ambition, Why English is Important, etc.). They need not worry about putting them in order. See how [Figure 1](#) consists of promptly and roughly generated ideas.

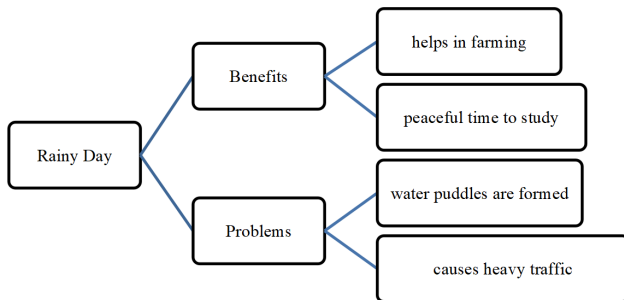
Tell them to do this for no more than 10 minutes. Their rough ideas should not be grammatically correct sentences.

Direct them to enlist Wh-questions like what, how, when, why, where, etc. and write one-sentence answers to these questions.

Ask each group to give some structure to their rough ideas. Write a single central idea—"Rainy Day," as can be seen in



**Figure 1. Rough ideas generated based on the given topic, but not sequenced.**



**Figure 2. Ideas generated based on the given topic are well-structured.**

**Table 1. Newspaper Headlines to Find Collocations**

S.N.	Headlines
1	Floods hit province 1
2	Police quiz coach over missing player
3	Oil companies slash prices
4	Car firm to axe 100 jobs

**Table 2. Some Pairs of Words That Collocate with Each Other**

Adjectives	Nouns	Adjectives	Nouns
Quick	Glance	Significant	Contribution
Panoramic	View	Speedy	Recovery
Relaxed	Atmosphere	Harsh	Criticism
Slender	Waist	Heated	Argument
Handsome	Salary	Rich	Vocabulary

Figure 2, for example—in a circle or a box on the whiteboard or blackboard, or you can use connecting lines to show how the ideas they have brainstormed relate as well. Communicate that there is not a definitive right or wrong approach to mind mapping or clustering. The purpose is to contemplate how different ideas and details interconnect with each other.

Direct your students to create a list of ideas or details for their essays. Prompt them to assemble these items sequentially, without focusing on the order. Enable them to gather as many points as they can conceive.

## 2.2 Learning Collocations

Crafting a written piece goes beyond the act of transferring

thoughts onto paper; it necessitates the thoughtful selection of words to faithfully capture a writer's specific ideas. The importance of choosing the right words in essay writing cannot be overstated, as it determines the accurate expression of intended meanings. When students neglect to pair words appropriately or utilize fitting collocations, their communication can falter, resulting in potential ambiguities. It is worth noting that while non-native English speakers may understandably encounter challenges with arbitrary collocations, it is concerning that over 60% of first language of a student Arab learners of English have demonstrated difficulties, producing awkward or incorrect collocations<sup>[8]</sup>.

As a writer, students may fail to communicate their ideas clearly if they do not select words that collocate with each other. A collocation is a combination of at least two words that frequently appear together. Using correct collocations makes their English sound more natural. For example, the verb “do” does not collocate with “mistakes”, but “make” collocates with “mistake”. A working definition of collocation is “the more-frequent-than-average co-occurrence of two lexical items within five words of text<sup>[9]</sup>. Collocations are the most frequently used word pairings by native speakers of English. McCarthy and O'Dell<sup>[10]</sup> suggested learning collocations so that the words chosen can fit the context better and have a more precise meaning. Teaching collocations in English as foreign/second language settings is a necessity.

### 2.2.1 Example Activities

Either ask your students to bring English newspapers into the classroom or provide them with some newspaper clippings. Instruct them to read headlines and underline typical news/media collocations like in Table 1.

Distribute flash cards containing different nouns among your students. After that, write some adjectives on the whiteboard/blackboards. Then, tell the students to check whether the adjectives on the board precede their nouns or not. Tell them to stick their cards (nouns) next to the adjectives that the noun collocates with (Table 2).

## 2.3 Writing a Paragraph

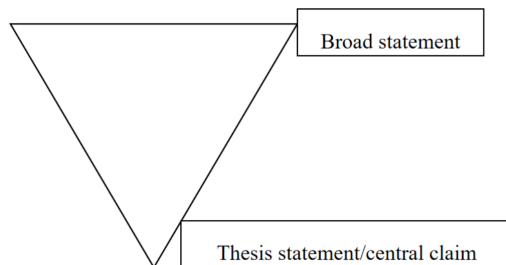
Before heading into essay writing, a student must learn to master the skill of writing a paragraph. A paragraph is a series of sentences that deal with one main idea or point. The length of a paragraph varies from 7 to 15 sentences. The length of a standard paragraph in a general essay is 5-8 sentences<sup>[11]</sup>. Paragraphs in all types of essays should be precise but detailed because long paragraphs can sometimes result in the loss of loci. A paragraph begins with a main idea (topic sentence) followed by supporting sentences<sup>[12]</sup>. Moreover, a paragraph is the basic unit of academic writing in English. Students who aspire to hone their writing skills for communicating their ideas, especially writing all types of essays, must focus on writing well-structured paragraphs first because essays consist of well-detailed paragraphs.

**Table 3. Identifying Major and Minor Supporting Sentences Adopted**

Topic Sentence	Life in a Refugee Camp is Full of Difficulties
Major supporting ideas	
i. Not enough food to eat	
ii. Scarce water for drinking and washing	
iii. Limited space	
Conclusion	

**Table 4. A List of Common Transition Words**

First of All	Second	Also	Next	In Addition
Furthermore	Moreover	Third	Last of all	Finally



**Figure 3. The upside-down pyramid of an introductory paragraph.**

The main idea or central theme of a paragraph is encapsulated in the topic sentence. To bolster this primary point, students are required to furnish precise reasons, warrants, data, examples, and additional details that elucidate and elaborate on it. There are two categories of supporting sentences: major and minor. Major supporting sentences offer direct support to the topic sentence, while minor supporting sentences provide direct support to the major supporting sentences. The following model outline (Table 3), as proposed by O'Donnell & Paiva<sup>[13]</sup>, can serve as a useful reference.

### 2.3.1 Example Activities

First, draw a picture of a burger on the whiteboard/blackboard or put up a big picture of a burger and ask students some questions. For example, *"What is this? What is it made of? Why do you think I have drawn or displayed this picture?"* After some interactions, play the YouTube video entitled "English as a Second Language (ESL)-Paragraph Writing-The Burger Method" (YouTube video URL link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liPJvPGC0eI>). After they watch the video, again ask questions like *"How can you relate a paragraph to a burger? What is the structure of a paragraph?"* This will help children communicate their ideas and interactions and inject enthusiasm into class. (for more information and tips on writing paragraphs, see this resource developed by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

(<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/paragraphs/>)

As a teacher, write a topic sentence on the whiteboard/blackboard. After that, allocate 5min to the class to think about the main supporting details and minor supporting details. (Give them some keywords so that they will have a similar chain of thoughts.) Invite one student at a time and tell him/her to write only one sentence accordingly. It may not be feasible to invite everyone to the board and continue to develop the paragraph from the topic sentence if you have more than 15 students in class. So, call students randomly so that everyone remains prepared. You may start the activity by saying, *"May I ask roll No.5 student to come up to the board and add a sentence for the paragraph?"*

To help your students organize the supporting details in a paragraph, get them to use transition words that show listing. Distribute handouts containing a paragraph where transition words are missing for each student. First, they must write their names in the handout. Once they are finished with the task, they should exchange their handouts with bench partners for peer correction. Now, the paragraph with correct transition words in bold must be projected onto a screen, or you should read out the paragraph with the answers (Table 4).

## 2.4 Parts of an Essay (In General)

Simon and Schuster<sup>[2]</sup> emphasized that proficient writing is not an immediate outcome; rather, it necessitates the consistent application of acquired knowledge and ongoing refinement. Breaking down a complete essay into smaller components is a helpful approach for students, enabling a more thorough understanding. Fortunately, the essay-writing process mirrors that of crafting a paragraph. A paragraph, with its topic sentence and supporting details, aligns with an essay's structure, which consists of a thesis statement followed by supporting paragraphs. An essay typically comprises three sections: an introductory paragraph, multiple supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

### 2.4.1 Introductory Paragraph

An effectively composed introductory paragraph not only captures the reader's attention but also articulates the thesis statement clearly. The thesis statement functions as an expression of the essay's central idea. For example, I feel restaurants, lenient parents and very little exercise are responsible for the increasing number of overweight children. An essay with this thesis statement would go on to explain how these three factors contribute to the worsening situation of obesity among children.

Students can gain the reader's interest by applying one of these four famous techniques in the introductory paragraph of their essays.

#### 2.4.1.1 Example Activities

Draw a picture of an upside-down pyramid (Figure 3) on



**Table 5. The Template Containing Major Questions to be Answered in the Essay**

Topic of Your Essay	Overweight Children
Thesis statement/sentence	I feel restaurants, lenient parents and very little exercise are responsible for the increasing number of overweight children.
No. of body paragraphs you intend to write	(Two or Three)
Topic sentences of body paragraphs	
At least two major questions designed to be answered	Why do parents allow their children to eat junk food? Why do children lack physical exercises?

**Table 6. Template for Writing Topic Sentences**

Thesis Statement: I Feel Restaurants, Lenient Parents and Very Little Exercise are Responsible for the Increasing Number of Overweight Children.	
Topic sentence 1:	We hardly get adults that cook meal at home.
Topic sentence 2:	Children lack physical exercises at home.
Topic sentence 3:	Parents are responsible for their children to become obese.

the whiteboard or noticeboard to reinforce the concept of an introductory paragraph in your students. Divide your class into groups. Provide them with chart papers with the headings A, B, C, .... Ask them to begin with a broad or general statement and narrow it down to their thesis statements. For their reference, you could write a sample introduction on the whiteboard or blackboard. For example, you could write, *“There is plenty of evidence to suggest that children are becoming overweight, and the situation is getting worse, according to some doctors. People have different opinions on the reasons for the worsening situation. I feel restaurants, lenient parents and very little exercise are responsible for the increasing number of overweight children.”*

Hand out A4 sheets of paper in class. Tell your students to take some time to present an idea or situation that is the opposite of what will be written about in their essay. Initially, your students may seem bewildered. Either write or project a modal paragraph onto the screen to help your students generate ideas. You could write *“When I was a student, I hardly visited my principal’s office. We were frightened of our principal. There was hardly any communication between us. But the situation is different with today’s students. My students frequently visit the principal’s office to discuss things they are not comfortable with.”*

Ask your students, *“Do you love listening to stories?”* Most probably, they will say yes. Tell them that like them their readers also love reading stories. A short story adds some flavor to essays. Roles of sharing personal experiences are important in language teaching whether a language is written or spoken. Jones<sup>[14]</sup> wrote that anecdotes or personal experiences play a significant role in human interaction that can provide an enthusiastic display of language. Now, have them come up with a very short yet arresting story

(anecdote) that will serve as background for the central idea of their essays. (For example, the following anecdote can be useful if a student is writing an essay on Every Child is Born with Unique Talents.) *“Once a four-year-old boy came home from school with a note in his hand. Reading the note, his mother wiped her tears and told him that he would be home-schooled. She could not tell her son that he was expelled from school for being addled. But the same child became the inventor of the light bulb—Thomas Alva Edison. Every child in our society matters because they are born with some special talents to be nurtured.”* For such anecdotes, students must read biographies of the world’s famous personalities. (See <https://uvadahlia.wordpress.com/2015/01/01/10-curious-anecdotes-about-10-of-the-most-famous-writers-of-all-times-by-annarita-tranfici> for examples and references).

When a student starts writing an essay, he or she has already considered some important questions to be answered. (For example, their essay is about coffee and they intend to present both pros and cons of coffee and share their individual opinions on it.) Beginning an introductory paragraph with two or more questions can be hooks to grip the attention of readers. After this, have your students complete the template (Table 5) carefully and remind them that their essays must apply to their questions.

## 2.4.2 Supporting Paragraphs

Although traditionally, high schools or colleges demand an essay with three supporting paragraphs, do not tell students to limit their essays to two or three supporting paragraphs, but tell them to choose the number of supporting paragraphs depending on the word limit of the essay assigned. The important thing is each of the supporting paragraphs should have its own topic sentence which should relate to the thesis statement or sentence directly. Before assigning your students the task of writing topic sentences, provide them with the format (Table 6) below for their reference.

### 2.4.2.1 Example Activities

Only after you approve of their topic sentences, tell them to elaborate on their topic sentences. You may write Topic sentence 1 for their convenience. You could write: Topic Sentence 1: In our vicinity, there is a prevalence of restaurants offering low-cost, unhealthy, and fatty food options like French fries, soda, and fried chicken. Students must be told

**Table 7. Concluding Table Template**

Sentence 1	Restate Your Thesis Statement As a Reminder.
Sentence 2	Summarize your body paragraphs.
Sentence 3	Write your counterargument for an argumentative essay.
Sentence 4	Write a recommendation or solution or prediction.

that different topic sentences are generated from a single topic statement. It is not universal—countless topic sentences can be generated from a given topic. After each group is finished with the task, ask group leaders to read out their topic sentences.

Another step to follow here is to write supporting sentences and examples for topic sentences. It may look grueling at first and later when students get started, some might unexpectedly be filled with a flood of ideas. At this stage too, you can show them how they can develop a topic sentence into a well-detailed supporting paragraph. (See the example below.)

Topic Sentence 1: In our vicinity, there is a prevalence of restaurants offering low-cost, unhealthy, and fatty food options like French fries, soda, and fried chicken.

Supporting sentences: This phenomenon has led to an entire generation of adults who lack experience in preparing their own meals. Reducing the prevalence of such restaurants could diminish the allure of takeout for children. Take Nepal's villages, for instance, where children, accustomed to consuming home-cooked meals, exhibit robust health and vitality.

Now, ask each group to elaborate on their topic sentences with examples where possible.

### 2.4.3 Concluding Paragraph

Concluding paragraphs hold significant importance in summarizing an essay. They typically restate the thesis statement and, at times, recapitulate the main supporting points or rephrase elements from the introduction. These paragraphs are usually kept concise, similar in length to the introduction. The following template (Table 7) can be useful:

### 2.5 Writing the First Draft/Structuring

At this stage, students should be prepared to put in additional thoughts and details that did not emerge in their prewriting. After key ideas are gathered, students must be encouraged to go on to write instead of getting stuck to a point because while drafting an essay, they should continue to build momentum in the process of writing their essay. They should refrain themselves from worrying about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. The most important thing here is to develop the content with plenty of relevant details. It is understandable that the idea of correction is contentious in EFL or ESL contexts. A lot of debates have revolved

around the best approaches to accuracy and error correction in EFL classes. Ekinci and Ekinci<sup>[15]</sup> shared that their study suggest that providing indirect written feedback through error correction codes is an effective strategy to help students hone their writing proficiency. Similarly, most studies have revealed that self-correction and underlining of errors were found to be viable methods<sup>[16]</sup>. Truscott<sup>[17]</sup> disagreed with the previous studies that error correction is beneficial in second language of a student (L2) writing. Most writers hold the view that students' big ideas outweigh language proficiency in writing classes. Graff and Birkenstein<sup>[18]</sup> suggested thinking of global revisions (big ideas) as more important than microlevel ones (surface-level issues like word choice, grammar, style, etc.), in practice the two levels are deeply independent. Therefore, surface-level errors are also important but should not discourage students from communicating their ideas through writing at the initial stage.

### 2.6 Revising/Refining

Revising should be taken into serious consideration in the writing process of an essay. Revising means students should rework their essays, building on what has been done to make them stronger, better, and clearer. One writer has said about revising that it is like cleaning house—getting rid of all the junk and putting things in the right order<sup>[19]</sup>. Nobody is perfect. No matter how careful and meticulous someone is, without revisions an essay may also contain surface-level errors that might contribute to the ambiguity of the essay. The moment of revision, of going back to a text, offers us a better opportunity to encourage students to rethink not just what they have to say but also what they are trying to do as writers<sup>[20]</sup>. To put it another way, if required, we must look for the best words/substitutions at this stage. Harris cautions that we cannot just think changes to an essay but need to make them. Students need to grapple with the strengths and weaknesses of their actual revision work to fine-tune the metacognitive thinking that will lead to a more successful revision in the future<sup>[21]</sup>. Revision cannot be overlooked if a writer wishes to clearly communicate his/her ideas. To refine their essay, students are expected to write one or two more drafts for quality publication.

### 2.7 Editing/Proofreading by Peers

Proofreading is the final stage in the writing process. After students supply with details or content, their essays should be strong in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation, word choice, and other possible errors. Such proofreading is a difficult job to do. It is understandable that students want to avoid proofreading after putting a tremendous amount of effort and time into writing. At this stage, some sentences or paragraphs might be tweaked for length and quality. One proofreading strategy involves reading the essay in reverse, starting from the last sentence and moving towards the first. This technique helps students avoid becoming immersed in the essay's flow, making it less likely to overlook minor errors. Reading in reverse disrupts the expected sequence,

making it easier to focus on each sentence independently and identify small mistakes like typos or missing words<sup>[22]</sup>. Likewise, Graff and Birkenstein suggested setting your draft aside for a few days so that when you return to it you can reread it with fresh eyes<sup>[18]</sup>.

In many situations, peer correction with symbols can be very effective. This is effective if students may feel more comfortable to discuss their weaknesses and strength with each other. Also, they can learn better by proofreading each other's drafts. So, by giving a teacher's authority to students we can build an atmosphere of a student-centered classroom. This may improve students' reading, writing and analytical skills.

### 2.7.1 Example Activity

Allow your students to be acquainted with the correction symbols that you have developed (Table S1). Hand out your correction symbols list. Let your students exchange their essays with classmates who are not their bench partners. To know what an essay looks like using peer correction with symbols technique (Table S2). This correction technique helps in maintaining neat work. In many cases, students develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning. Using a pencil, students will proofread each other's essays. Allocate a maximum of one day's time for peer correction, or you could tell peers to go through each other's essays in the classroom itself. After this, all of them need to write the second draft. Harmer<sup>[23]</sup> emphasizes the importance of addressing potential issues associated with peer correction in language teaching. It cannot be avoided that some students are hesitant to exchange their essays thinking their essays may be inferior to those of other classmates. Teachers should deal with this sensitive issue wisely and professionally.

### 2.8 Peer Review and Publication

While proofreading is commonly considered the concluding stage of the writing process, participating in peer review before publication represents an additional essential step. The evaluation of essay drafts by peers before submission to the teacher provides an opportunity for individuals to compare writing quality, offer constructive feedback with some authority, and foster social interaction. Peer review is an instructional writing activity wherein students read and provide commentary on each other's writing, aiming to assist students in enhancing their writing skills and developing an awareness of their audience<sup>[24]</sup>.

Many educators worldwide are incorporating peer review at the school level/college level as a means to evaluate writing for validity, quality, and sometimes originality prior to publication. In our context, we must inform students why they are going to engage in peer review.

#### 2.8.1 Example Activities

Collect the second drafts of essays from every student. You

could collect prompt feedback on the activity of proofreading by asking questions like *"Did you enjoy doing this activity? Was it fun? Did you learn something from it? Did you feel like being an editor/proofreader/reviewer, etc.? Do you want peer review in other subjects, too?"* Distribute the collected essays to different students randomly and ask them to rate the essays on a scale of 1 to 5 (5=very good; 4=good; 3=average; 2=some rework; 1=third draft; 0=not attempted). Along with the second draft, hand out two more forms: Peer Review Essay Evaluation Checklist and Feedback Form for the Essay Reviewer (Table S3 and S4). Students need to tick the elements their peer's essay comprises. Likewise, they need to write their comment in the feedback form, highlighting the areas their peer needs to work on. Well-detailed and convincing feedback will be appreciated. Students are required to fill out the feedback form so that they do not miss out on any important points at the time of face-to-face review in the classroom. (If your students have access to the internet, you could encourage them to communicate and discuss their essays via Messenger, Viber, or WhatsApp). When peers sit together to discuss the feedback they have written down, their communication skills may improve, and they tend to be more interactive and sociable.

Towards the end of this review time, collect all the essays for your final correction and write your feedback with a color pen on their essays and give your feedback the next day in your class. (Note: You could discuss the strengths and flaws of their writing on the whole if you have to teach a large class. Or else, you could call a student up to the teacher's table and discuss his or her essay. It is obviously more effective.)

### 3 RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the research subjects comprised 38 undergraduate students enrolled in a private college in Kathmandu, Nepal. The selection of participants was based on the fact that they were the most recent cohort to have experienced my recently devised step-by-step guidance, which was when the research was conducted. The self-report questionnaire was chosen for its ability to efficiently capture subjective experiences, such as students' perceptions of essay writing. Its moderate number of statements strikes a balance between comprehensiveness and participant burden. SPSS was selected as the statistical analysis software due to its robust capabilities in managing and analyzing quantitative data, aligning well with the research goals of exploring relationships and patterns within the dataset. The researcher adopted a mixed methods approach to gather data for each research question. Qualitative methods focus on understanding the "why" and "how" behind phenomena through open-ended questions, observations, and interviews. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, involve collecting numerical data to analyze patterns and relationships. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, capturing both the depth of individual experiences and the broader trends and patterns within the data.

**Table 8. Undergraduate Students' Response to the Researcher's Step-By-Step Guidance on Writing Essays**

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Step-by-step guidance on writing essays is helpful.	38	4.62	1.923
2. Writing through interaction is fun and motivating.	38	4.6	1.721
3. Fun is not very important in writing classes.	38	3.92	1.21
4. Activities must be incorporated into essay writing classes.	38	3.75	1.001
5. We want our English teachers to correct our errors.	38	3.33	1.321
6. We love to revise our essays ahead of final submission.	38	3.52	1.004
Total means		3.9	

To examine the strategies that English education students use to regulate their motivation during essay writing, the researcher utilized a self-report questionnaire adapted from Teng and Zhang<sup>[25]</sup>. The questionnaire's validity was confirmed with a significance level below 0.05<sup>[26]</sup>, and it demonstrated high reliability at 0.833, as indicated by DeVellis<sup>[27]</sup>. Comprising six statements, the questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert Scale.

The participants were given a questionnaire handout without the need for including their names to ensure confidentiality. To collect the data from them, their consent forms were collected in the presence of the College Coordinator. The collected data were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistical techniques, focusing on central tendencies. For this primary data analysis, we utilized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25. The mean scores derived from descriptive statistics served as the basis for interpreting the qualitative data. A higher mean score reflected a stronger agreement with the given statement, while a lower score indicated less agreement. These mean scores provided insights into the specific motivational factors required by undergraduate students to actively engage and exhibit increased enthusiasm in their writing classes, particularly concerning essays.

Understanding the specific motivational factors identified by students can inform instructional strategies aimed at enhancing engagement and enthusiasm in writing classes. For instance, if students consistently indicate a preference for collaborative writing activities in the qualitative data, educators can incorporate more group work and peer review opportunities into their curriculum. Additionally, addressing factors that received lower mean scores, such as perceived relevance of writing assignments, can help educators design more contextually meaningful tasks that resonate with students' interests and goals.

#### 4 RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The survey was conducted in the classroom. It took around 20 min for the students to complete their questionnaire. To make their responses reliable and trustworthy, they were instructed to write the answers in ink, and they were discouraged from writing down their names on the questionnaire form for confidentiality.

The data (Table 8), collected from 38 participants regarding their views on writing essays in a classroom setting, reveals several insights. On average, participants found step-by-step guidance and interactive writing to be highly beneficial and motivating, with mean scores of 4.62 and 4.60, respectively. They also emphasized the importance of incorporating activities into essay writing classes, with a mean score of 3.75. However, there was some variability in participants' opinions on the importance of fun in writing classes (mean of 3.92) and the desire for English teachers to correct errors (mean of 3.33), indicating mixed sentiments on these aspects. The attitude toward revising essays ahead of final submission received moderately positive feedback with a mean score of 3.52. Overall, participants generally value structured guidance and interactive learning in essay writing, but their preferences for fun, error correction, and essay revision display some diversity.

Notably, the resounding agreement regarding the enjoyment and motivation derived from interactive writing experiences underscores the value of collaborative and engaging learning environments in fostering students' enthusiasm and commitment to writing tasks. Nonetheless, while fun and interaction are generally prized in writing classes, the moderate agreement with the statement suggesting their lesser importance indicates a nuanced perspective among participants, acknowledging the need for a balanced approach that prioritizes both enjoyment and academic rigor.

#### 5 DISCUSSION

Compared to previous studies in the field of essay writing pedagogy, several noteworthy similarities and differences emerge. Previous research, such as that conducted by Smith et al. and Jones has emphasized the importance of structured approaches to essay writing, highlighting the benefits of step-by-step guidance and interactive learning environments. This study echoes these sentiments, indicating a strong need for systematic instruction and engaging activities in teaching essay writing.

However, this paper diverges from some prior research is in the specific emphasis on the gradual progress of essay writing and the incorporation of hands-on activities in conjunction with theories. While existing literature often acknowledges the iterative nature of the writing



**Table 9. Class Test Questions**

Answer each of the following questions by filling in the blank or shading the correct answer.

a. An effective paragraph or essay

① makes a point. ② provides specific support

③ makes a point and provides specific support. ④ does none of the above.

b. The sentence that states the main idea of a paragraph is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ sentence; the sentence that states the central idea of an essay is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ sentence.

c. Traditionally, an essay consists of \_\_\_\_\_ parts.

d. An essay is made up of \_\_\_\_\_.

e. A thesis statement.

① is generally part of an essay's introduction. ② states the central idea of the essay.

③ can be followed by the essay's plan of development. ④ all of the above.

f. True or False? \_\_\_\_\_ During the freewriting process, you should not concern yourself with spelling, punctuation, or grammar.

process, my findings underscore the significance of this gradual evolution, suggesting that effective essay writing is not merely the result of a single draft but rather a product of continuous refinement through rigorous thinking and meticulous planning.

Furthermore, this paper contributes to the literature by advocating for a blended approach to teaching essay writing, combining theoretical concepts with practical, interactive hands-on activities. While some research has explored the efficacy of interactive learning methods, few have specifically examined the integration of these methods within the context of essay writing instruction. By demonstrating the positive impact of such an approach on students' writing experiences, this paper offers a valuable contribution to the pedagogical strategies employed in writing education.

Moreover, our research conducted in a college setting in Nepal provides unique insights into the challenges and needs of students in a diverse cultural context. While certain principles of effective writing instruction may be universal, the specific preferences and learning styles of students may vary across different educational settings. By addressing these challenges within the Nepalese context, this paper expands the scope of literature on essay writing pedagogy, offering practical implications for educators both locally and globally.

## 6 RESEARCH LIMITATION

This paper acknowledges a limitation in its sample size, consisting of only 38 Nepali undergraduate students, which may hinder broad generalizations or definitive conclusions. While recognizing this limitation, it emphasizes the valuable insights provided by the study, offering direction for future exploration. It recommends conducting more extensive research with larger and more diverse samples to improve reliability and external validity. Expanding the sample size enables broader applicability of the findings and enhances the trustworthiness of any conclusions drawn.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Composing essays poses a formidable challenge for both students and educators, as it entails a thorough process starting from prewriting and concluding with peer review. This process demands students to navigate through necessary revisions to produce a refined piece of work. While initiating essays can be a struggle for students, they often sustain that momentum as they progress. Unlike the innate skills of listening and speaking, the development of writing proficiency requires deliberate learning efforts<sup>[28]</sup>. In the context of EFL, mastering writing skills specifically involves the ability to organize ideas coherently, utilizing precise language and practical word choices to make one's writing easily accessible and comprehensible to the reader<sup>[29]</sup>.

As a teacher, teaching how to write an essay through interaction and activities for students in English as a foreign or second language settings is an urgent need in recent times. Dividing the entire job of writing an essay into chunks is essential to synthesize and acquire information to produce a surprisingly good product. According to Davies and Pearse<sup>[30]</sup> interactive feedback and involvement stimulate students for better language activities with motivation. Siding with them, Alghasab et al.<sup>[31]</sup> opined that dialogue between teachers and students can foster productive discourse influencing positively the collaborative writing process among students, which may lead to good writing products. In addition, the interactive process of teaching writing can also help teachers teach writing not as a grueling and painstaking job, but as a fun-filled assignment from which a quality product emanates surprisingly. Collaboration, interaction, and fun activities must be placed at the heart of any writing lesson.

## 8 CLASS TEST

It is a teacher's responsibility to ensure that students learn something from his/her class. A class test can be a useful index of to what degree students have understood the chapter taught in class. You are advised to give them a small test like (Table 9) if possible. (To check the answer, see Table S5.)

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

## Author Contribution

The author contributed to the manuscript and approved the final version independently.

## Abbreviation List

EFL, English as a Foreign Language

ESL, English as a Second Language

L1, First language of a student

L2, Second language of a student

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**Table S1. Correction Symbols**

Types of Correction	Symbols
Full stop	○
Question mark	(?)
Exclamation mark	(!)
Comma	(,)
Other punctuation marks	Pn
Tense	T
Space	<>
Conjunction	C
Articles	A
Preposition	Pr
Adverb	Adv
Adjective	Adj
Pronoun	Prn
Replacement	^
Deletion	⊗
Confusion	?
Incomplete	....
Add	⊕
Capitalization	©

**Table S2. A Sample of Corrected Essay with Symbols****Why Children are Becoming Overweight**

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that children are becoming overweight and the situation is getting worse, according to some doctors. People have different opinions on the reasons of the worsening situation. I feel restaurants, lenient parents and very little exercise are responsible for the increasing number of overweight children.

This has created a whole generation of adults who have never cooked a meal for themselves. If there were fewer of such restaurants, then children would not be tempted to buy take-away food. For example, in most villages of Nepal, children are active and strong as they do eat cooked meals only.

Parents were also accountable for their children to become an overweight. I tend to agree with this view, as good eating habits begin early in life, long before children start to visit fast food outlets. Being busy parents give chips, coke, French fries, etc. to their children instead of nourishing food, or parents allow their children to eat whatever they like. As a result, they will go for the sweet and salty foods every time, and this will carry on throughout their lives.

There is a third factor, however, which contributes to the situation. Children these days take very little exercise. They do not walk to school. When they get home, they sit in front of the television or their computers and play computer games or use the mobile. Not only is this an unhealthy pastime, it also gives them time to eat more junk food. What they need is to go outside and play different physical games.

In conclusion the two views discussed play an equal role in contributing to the problem, but I think we have to encourage young people to be more active, as well as steering them away from junk food and bad eating habits. We need to have a balanced approach.

**Table S3. Peer Review Essay Evaluation Checklist**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

- The introductory paragraph has a clear thesis statement.
- Supporting paragraphs have topic sentences.
- Topic sentences of paragraphs relate to the thesis statement.
- Each topic sentence is supported by sufficient details and examples.
- The essay follows a structure.
- The essay contains appropriate collocations.
- Paragraphs are connected through transition words.
- The conclusion restates the introductory paragraph.
- The essay comprises clear and well-developed presentation of the topic.
- The essay is original and represents the view of the writer.
- The essay is revised for grammar, spelling, punctuation and other related errors.
- The essay is worth reading and worth sharing.

**Table S4. Feedback Form for the Essay Reviewer**

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Your Constructive Feedback:

Dear .....,

I enjoyed reading your essay. I think your hook is captivating! Your thesis statement is very specific. In addition, I really liked that you varied your use of words. Your language is clear and to the point. I would like to make suggestions on how to improve your essay for the final draft. First, I think that you should work on your punctuation.

Second, some collocations used in the essay do not sound natural. Please recheck them using an authentic dictionary.

At some points, you have used big words. For example, in paragraph 1, you have used big words like 'lenient' and 'steering away' in the last paragraph. However, your essay contains very ordinary words which make your writing very simple for high school students.

Lastly, based on your writing, you deserve 4 on a scale of 1 to 5.

This is my feedback on your essay. If you have any questions, please feel free to communicate with me via Viber, email, Messenger or in person.

Best,

.....

(Reviewer)

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**Table S5. Answers to the Class Test Questions**

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a. 3; b. topic; thesis; c. 3/three; d. paragraphs; e. 4; f. True.

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